



Teacher Competency Improvement Strategy in Facing the Challenges of 21st Century Education at Mts LKMD Sawa Buru-Maluku

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Article History: Recieved : 17-Jul-2025 Revised : 04-Aug-2025 Accepted : 17-Sep-2025 Available online : 30-Sep-2025</p> <p>Keyword: teacher competence, 21st century education, improvement strategy, MTs LKMD Sawa, digitalization of education.</p>	<p>This study focuses on MTs LKMD Sawa, Buru Regency, Maluku, using a descriptive qualitative approach to explore the challenges and strategies for improving teacher competence in facing the dynamics of 21st century education. The results of the study were obtained through in-depth interviews with teachers and the head of the madrasah. The findings indicate that teachers face significant challenges, such as limited technological facilities, disparities in digital literacy, a lack of practice-based instruction, and declining student motivation to learn. Strategies implemented to address these challenges include continuous training, teacher collaboration, the use of digital media, and value-based and contextual learning approaches. The integration of technology and humanistic pedagogical approaches is key to shaping adaptive and relevant teachers. This study concludes that teacher professional development must be collaborative, contextual, and continuous. With institutional support and reflective awareness from teachers, the educational process will become more meaningful and transformative. This study also recommends strengthening the digital ecosystem in madrasahs and involving teacher learning communities as the main pillars of competency transformation in the digital era. These findings highlight the importance of collaboration between teachers and institutions in addressing educational transformation in the digital era. This study is expected to serve as a reference for educational institutions in designing strategies to enhance teacher competencies that are relevant to contemporary challenges.</p>



INTRODUCTION

With the development of technology and social changes in the 21st century, teachers must have more complex and adaptive skills. Current technological advancements have influenced various aspects of our lives, including how we communicate, collaborate, learn, and, of course, teach. This increase in knowledge is supported by the use of various media and digital technologies, known as the “knowledge superhighway,” which is a combination of technology and digital media that supports knowledge (Inayah, 2022) (Arifin & Setiawan, 2020).

Not only must teachers master the subject matter, they must also be able to use IT to encourage students to think critically and creatively (Tarihoran, 2019)). However, many teachers in Indonesia are still struggling to meet this need. This is due to a lack of access to technology-based training and a lack of institutional support (Muthmainnah et al., 2025) A study by (Acesta, n.d.) shows that changes to the Teacher Professional Education Program (PPG) can significantly improve teachers' pedagogical and technological skills.

Nevertheless, mapping pedagogical competencies is very important for dealing with the characteristics of Generation Alpha students, who have different learning needs (Ofita & Sururi, 2023). Thus, the purpose of this study is to determine the challenges faced by teachers in improving their abilities in the modern era and the effective approaches for improving teachers' abilities to overcome these challenges.

Research (A. Akbar, 2021) reveals that Islamic Education teachers face challenges in integrating technology into learning, but also have the opportunity to improve their competence through technology-based training. In addition, according to research (Somantri, 2024) teachers' pedagogical competence is very important in overcoming educational barriers in the global era.

This study aims to provide theoretical and practical benefits. Theoretically, the results can enhance research on ways to improve teachers' abilities in modern education. Practically, the results can be used by educational institutions and policymakers to create effective educational programs that meet teachers' needs. A study (Sumar et al., 2020) found that the methods currently used by teachers to implement modern learning through online learning models can significantly improve teachers' abilities.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative research method because the main focus of this study is to explore in depth the challenges faced by teachers and the strategies that can be used to improve their competence based on perceptions, experiences, and practices in the field. This descriptive qualitative research aims to gain a deeper understanding of events through data collection through interviews, observations, and documentation.

In this context, this approach allows researchers to capture the realities that teachers face in their professional practice and what strategies have been used or are needed to address the challenges of the 21st century. They can conduct case studies in several schools or use in-depth.

(Fauziah et al., 2021), stated that qualitative descriptive research is very relevant to explain the process and meaning of educational actions, including learning strategies and the development of educators' abilities (Fitria, 2023). In addition, because qualitative descriptive research can describe the social and cultural dynamics that impact teacher competence, this method can be used in educational policies and practices.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. RESULT

This research was conducted at MTs LKMD Sawa, Buru Regency, Maluku. The results of interviews conducted with two teachers and the head of the madrasah showed that the two competencies considered most important by teachers today are mastery of digital technology and understanding of religious teachings. Teachers realize that facing challenges in today's education world requires not only mastery of subject matter, but also incorporating Islamic values into the technology-based education process.

One of the main problems faced by teachers at MTs LKMD Sawa in improving their skills is the limited facilities provided by the institution, such as limited technology and internet facilities, and limited time to attend classes and read reference materials. In addition, because students do not have sufficient digital skills, teachers face difficulties in adapting technology to them. As a result, technology-based learning needs to be repeated.

Teachers use strategies such as taking professional training both online and offline, reading additional literature, and using video-based learning media and internet applications to increase student engagement. In this case, the madrasah provides support in the form of learning facilities such as Wi-Fi, laptops, and infocus. The madrasah also allows teachers to participate in external activities such as seminars and MGMP. Institutional support also has a positive impact on the development of teacher competence and learning effectiveness. The head of the madrasah also emphasized the importance of the role of teachers as the vanguard in instilling moral and ethical values amidst the challenges of globalization and technological developments.

Based on the results of interviews at MTs LKMD Sawa, it was found that teachers face a number of challenges, including:

1. **Lack of Technological Facilities:** Few digital devices such as laptops, infocus, and unstable internet connections hinder the technology-based learning process.
2. **Lack of Practical Training :** Teachers do not often conduct practical training related to the use of technology in education.

3. **Digital Literacy Limitations:** Many students are not yet accustomed to using digital platforms or applications.
4. **Lack of Time and Reading Resources:** Teachers struggle to find time to read and update their knowledge due to their heavy workload.

However, teachers took the initiative to take independent training, attend seminars, use video-based learning media, and apply problem-solving strategies and contextual learning. Support from the head of the madrasah in the form of providing facilities and training permits also strengthened efforts to improve teacher competence.

B. DISCUSSION

1. Improving teacher professionalism in the digital era

A teacher is an educator who must have adequate skills and expertise in carrying out the tasks of teaching, educating, and guiding students so that they can develop their potential optimally (Qulub, 2019). In today's digital era, where the progress of science and technology is so rapid, a teacher must improve his quality and abilities in order to create his professionalism properly (Rowiya & Natuna, 2022).

Professionalism in the world of education requires educators to be able to keep up with the increasingly rapid developments in technology and science in the current digital era. Professional teachers must be able to apply science and technology appropriately in the learning process, and be able to develop creative and innovative learning methods so that they are able to attract students' interest in being actively involved in the learning process (Arifin & Setiawan, 2020).

In order for education to remain relevant in today's technologically advanced world, certified educators must be original thinkers and adept at incorporating scientific and technological concepts into their teaching, as well as designing engaging lessons that motivate students to take an active role in their own education.

2. Teacher Professionalism Competency Development Strategy

Based on the results of previous research observations, development strategies to support teacher professionalism are outlined and discussed specifically into three of them:

- a. Coaching program with an individual approach

This program is designed individually by considering the characteristics and challenges faced by each teacher. Although teachers have the same education and have received the same education, their potential to teach in the classroom can vary due to the unique characteristics and challenges of each teacher (Kinanthi et al., 2024). The differences are caused by differences in the

quality and difficulties of each teacher. Continuous training programs are very important for teachers. These programs can include workshops, teacher training, or workshops that focus on developing digital skills. Through these programs and training, teachers can learn the latest technology, useful educational applications, and how to incorporate them into the learning process (Sumar et al., 2020).

b. Changes in teacher training methods

The selection of learning methods is an important part of the teaching and learning process. To meet the demands of the 21st century 21 In today's era, teachers must change and modify their learning models to suit students' needs. By using the right method, Teachers are expected to be able to increase students' interest and attention to the material presented in class, as well as activate the knowledge they have learned (Tarihoran, 2019) Learning is considered as a process carried out by teachers to meet students' needs. Education created by teachers will improve all students' abilities and potentials, including the ability to create artwork, create innovation, solve problems, and other creative skills (Hasanah & Haryadi, 2022).

c. Doing collaboration

Teacher professional education involves the exchange of ideas about the learning process. By working together, teachers can improve their ability to change cultures and implement learning according to goals at the school level, institution, and district (Adolph, 2016). Collaborative learning also encourages students to find solutions, work together in groups, and share information.

Some ways collaborative learning can be incorporated into the curriculum are as follows: (Nursaya'bani et al., 2025):

- 1) Group project assignments that require students to work together to plan, implement, and present results. knowledge
- 2) Using digital platforms that allow students to interact and collaborate, such as cloud-based applications, chatrooms, and online forums.
- 3) Provide students with opportunities to share feedback with each other and assess the results of group work.
- 4) Some examples of technology that aid collaboration are the use of applications such as Google Suite, Microsoft Teams, and Zoom for automated group meetings and presentations.

The 21st century learning strategy emphasizes teachers to be able to adapt to changing times and create creative learning methods. By using this strategy, teachers can help students improve the skills needed to face global challenges such as critical thinking, cooperation, and creativity. With this approach, it is hoped that the learning

process can be more effective and relevant to the demands of this era (Sholikhah et al., 2025).

3. Challenges for 21st century teachers

Because they have diverse students in the 21st century, teachers face many challenges. With the ease of obtaining information through the internet, students gain more understanding and comprehension (Susilo & Sarkowi, 2018). Therefore, it becomes a challenge for teachers because they also have to adjust their information and stay connected with their students (Makmur, 2020). Since search engines cannot teach you how to deal with these things in life, teachers must be able to emphasize or teach more about values, customs, ethics, culture, experiences, and wisdom because a teacher today cannot compete with machines that are more knowledgeable and effective in obtaining information (Nursaya'bani et al., 2025).

To make students have character as the goal of education today, teachers need to teach values and morals more often (Septianingrum et al., 2022). Classroom management and learning must be adjusted to the standards of information and communication technology progress in this century. Teachers will be challenged to accelerate the development of information and communication in this century and the next century (F. Akbar, 2022).

4. Strategies that have proven effective include:

a. Individual Approach to Coaching

Every teacher has unique challenges and characteristics. Individual-based training programs have been shown to improve competencies more specifically (Kinanthi et al., 2024).

b. Transformation of Training Methods

Training must be adaptive to the Society 5.0 era. Teachers need to apply active learning models that build critical and creative thinking skills (Hasanah & Haryadi, 2022)

c. Inter-Teacher Collaboration

Collaboration enables the exchange of ideas and the strengthening of teaching practices. Platforms such as Google Workspace, Teams, and Zoom support collaboration in curriculum development (Adolph, 2016; Nursaya'bani et al., 2025)

d. Integration of Islamic Values and Digital Literacy

The combination of Islamic values and technology is a unique strategy at MTs LKMD Sawa. Teachers act as instillers of moral values amidst the rapid flow of globalization. (Makmur, 2020; Septianingrum et al., 2022)

CONCLUSION

To improve teachers' ability to face the challenges of modern education, a comprehensive and collaborative approach is needed. Teachers must continue to change through mastery of technology, self-development, and development of learning methods that are relevant to the characteristics of today's students. With cooperation between teachers, leaders, and statutory institutions, it is difficult to overcome external challenges such as limited facilities and low levels of digital literacy among students. To achieve this success, institutional support is needed in the form of training and provision of technology.

However, teachers must maintain Islamic values as the basis of character in learning. As a result, the strategy for developing skills must not only focus on digital skills, but must also emphasize the role of teachers as guardians of morality and morality in the midst of rapid globalization.

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